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The Science News-Letter

GENERAL SCIENCE

Scientists Cooperate With Government Through S. A. B.

Chairman Tells of Problems Considered by President's Science Advisers; New Plan Works Effectively

By DR. KARL T. COMPTON, Chairman, Science Advisory Board; President, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

THE Science Advisory Board, appointed by President Roosevelt on July 31, 1933, represents a new form of cooperation of the nation's scientific personnel with the government in its varied scientific services. It supplements and cooperates with the National Academy of Sciences and the National Research Council, which were established during the national emergencies of the Civil War and the Great War respectively, to aid the government, and which play an important role in the organization of the nation's scientific forces for increased effectiveness in ordinary times and particularly in times of stress.

The science Advisory Board has submitted to the President of the United States a report on its work from the date of appointment to September 1, 1934. While the details of this report can only be made public subject to release by the President, there is no impropriety in disclosing the general scope of the subjects which have engaged the study of the Board and its committees. Important among these subjects have been the program of the U. S. Weather Bureau, with particular reference to methods of weather forecasting and the cooperation of other governmental services; cooperation with a committee of railroad presidents to determine fundamental aspects of policy and organization, for insuring to the railroads the best contributions from modern science; questions of organization and program in the U. S. Geological Survey and the U. S. Bureau of Mines, with particular reference to the need for more adequate handling of mineral statistical information; re-definition of the functions of the U. S. Bureau of Standards, with detailed consideration of its program

and needs and particularly its method of cooperation with industry in the establishment of trade and commercial standards; a study of the surveying and mapping activities of the government distributed through 28 government bureaus, with particular consideration of efficiency in mapping and efficient service of mapping agencies to organizations which need maps for their operations; the formulation of a scientific basis for studies and administration of problems of land use, including soil erosion; preliminary studies of the chemical services of the government and also of certain features of a program for stimulation of new and preferably non-competitive industries.

In handling each of these and similar problems, the Board has established committees of prominent scientists and administrators who are pre-eminently competent in their respective fields, and including on each committee one or more members of the Board. These committees have carried on the detailed studies and formulated recommendations which have then been presented to the Board, forming the basis of the Boards' reports to the Department Secretaries or other administrative officers of the government. This procedure has worked effectively and rapidly, and the response of leading scientists and engineers to requests by the Board for their services on these committees has been uniformly gratifying and has demonstrated the eagerness and effectiveness with which such men are willing to devote their time and energy to government service for the sake of the most efficient operation of the government services which relate to their particular fields of interest. These committees, as well as the members of the Board, have served entirely without compensation.

Science News Letter, December 29, 1934



WATER OVER THE HILL

Water from the Owyhee River in the eastern Oregon project of the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation is carried across numerous canyons by giant siphons over ten feet in diameter, like that shown above. The scene is the Sniveley siphon over 900 feet long and completed arc welded throughout its length. Photograph by the Lincoln Electric Co.